

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office

January 13, 2000 LB 788

ASSISTANT CLERK: LB 788, offered by Senator Schrock. (Read title.) The bill was read for the first time on January 20th of this year, referred to the Natural Resources Committee. That committee reports the bill to General File with no committee amendments attached.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Schrock, you're recognized to open.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, as most people might say, this is a small, little bill that shouldn't take a lot of time, but you never know. This bill was heard in the Natural Resources Committee, February 11 of last year, and was advanced 7 to 0, with one person absent. It establishes the cash...Game Law Investigation Cash Fund for the purposes of obtaining evidence for the enforcement of the Game Law. Now it does have a \$5,000 fund; those monies are available without going through the appropriation process. It's kind of an in-house situation. As a matter of fact, a lot of sportsmen organizations have agreed to voluntarily contribute to this fund. You might note that the State Patrol has a similar fund. Wildlife law enforcement is not an identified area of responsibility for the State Patrol, however. So when Game and Parks is investigating violations of our law, they do not have this type of fund that our other law enforcement agencies have. So, I think the best way I could describe this is to use an example. Let's say Senator Hartnett likes to hunt and has obtained several pheasants, but he really doesn't like to eat pheasants. It is illegal to sell the meat. Interesting enough, he can sell the feathers and the skin, but he can't sell the meat. Well, let's say Senator Stuhr likes to eat pheasant and she buys these pheasants from him. That is illegal. And let's say an undercover officer with the Game and Parks, a conservation officer, was investigating this and approached Senator Hartnett and wanted to buy some pheasants for the purposes of convicting Senator Hartnett of a violation of our state laws. He would have to take that money out of...he or she would have to take that money out of their own pocket; we don't have a fund for that. And it's probably not the appropriate way to do that. So, Game and Parks has this budgeted, but they are not able to use it because they've been advised that, until we pass legislation authorizing it, this is not something they should be engaged in, at least using this Cash Fund. I guess